

*Complete video available at [Cal-Span](#) .*

On a two-to-one vote, the California State Lands Commission, chaired by Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, denied the first new oil lease in state waters in almost 40 years.

Garamendi, former Deputy Interior Secretary under President Bill Clinton, argued strongly that the plan would signal that California wants to open offshore drilling and supporters would push for more oil exploration on the West Coast.

"I refuse to let this lease move forward," Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi said. "Approving a drilling proposal will undercut congressional efforts to reintroduce a federal moratorium on offshore oil drilling earlier lifted by the Bush Administration."

The Lieutenant Governor chairs the three-member State Lands Commission, which considered the request to lease land to the Plains Exploration & Production Company to expand drilling off the coast of California.

The Lieutenant Governor, who has consistently opposed offshore drilling, recently spoke with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, and other members of the California congressional delegation who had significant concerns about the lease undercutting their attempts to reintroduce a federal moratorium on oil exploration off the coast.

The State Lands Commissions staff last week recommended voting down the lease, because there were no sound guarantees that the company would have to shut down the plan.

"This proposal is not in the best interests of California," Garamendi said. "Approval of this lease would be the first time new offshore oil drilling leases were issued in California waters in more than 40 years -- since the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill."